1: Burrows--29 (1947-48) Woleaians
116, 252, 262 Ifalik

"To prepare for cooking with other vegetables, the flesh of the ripe nut is grated with a different instrument, the large grater in general use throughout the tropical Pacific. It consists of a toothed edge, curved to fit the inside of a coconut, and attached to a stick. The stick may be laid across a log, or may be cut from a bough or sapling near where two branches fork off. The butt of a main piece and short lengths of the branches form a tripod. The grating edge, lashed to the projecting end of the main piece, may be of coconut shell or even rough coral; but nowadays virtually every household has a grater with a cutting edge filed out of a piece of steel. The grater is straddled and a half coconut, held in both hands, rubbed over it by pushing away from the body. The grated meat is put in a bowl, water poured over it, and the creamy juice squeezed out with the hands. Wringers of coconut husk fiber, which make a richer cream, but take more muscle, are not used in Ifalik.

The starchy vegetables which make up the bulk of the diet are commonly cooked in this coconut cream. Rarely is a meal served without either taro or breadfruit enriched with it. Coconut cream supplies most of the oil in the diet, though supplemented by oil from fish.

It would be a sad day in an Ifalik household if the morning and evening meals lacked one more coconut product, --the fresh toddy (garī) extracted from the flower stalks. Collecting toddy, morning and afternoon, is a daily task for the younger men. Climbing coconut trees is not expected of older ones."

"Perhaps the most important of all uses of coconut are drinking the juice of the young nuts and eating the meat, particularly of the ripe ones. Like most Pacific islanders, the Ifalik people have different names for the nut at different stages. A nut full-grown but green, full of good juice to drink, is called upu. When somewhat more mature, with sweeter juice but the flesh still soft, it is called seou. A ripe nut is mazou. A very ripe one, suitable for making copra, is trō; a sprouting nut, trō far.

Though some of the water in dug wells, or that collected in helmet shells or foreign metal drums, is used for drinking, the juice of young coconuts makes up far the greatest part of the drinking water. It is also used in a healing ritual which involves breaking open a young nut above the head of the patient, so that the juice pours over him.

The soft flesh of the young nut may be scooped out and eaten. Scoops are made, as generally in the tropical Pacific, by cutting off a bit of the green husk with a slanting blow of the knife, which gives it a sharp edge and a spoon-like shape. The hard flesh of the ripe nut may be split out of the shell and either eaten raw or roasted over an open fire. More commonly, though, it is removed by grating with an instrument like a spoon with a round bowl and a toothed edge where the point of one of our spoons would be. These are made of pieces of white metal like what used to be called 'German silver'. Making them is said to be an industry of many years' standing throughout the Carolines. Raw coconut eaten in this way is one of the main articles of diet Another is the spongy

body that fills the center of a sprouting nut. These are eaten without cooking or other preparation."

"Out of just three ingredients--taro, coconut cream, and fresh coconut toddy--the women prepare a considerable variety of dishes. Those that follow were noted down from gifts brought to us, and do not exhaust the resources of native cookery:

arongiumat-mashed taro with raw coconut cream

aronguvis-whole taro cooked in coconut cream

maigogo-mashed taro, cooked in coconut cream long enough to form a brown crust

malegefale-) big pieces, soaked for a long time in toddy before
pulax vauvau-) cooking. (These seem to be two names for the same preparation; at any rate, if there is a difference, it was not noted.)

pelopel-mashed taro, cooked with coconut cream, put in a bowl and moulded in little square mounds, the hollows between these filled by pouring in toddy.

[39]shewoshū-taro mashed, mixed with coconut cream and toddy, cooked long so that a brown crust forms on top.

(name not learned)-taro cut in small pieces and cooked in coconut cream without mashing. Varieties of rather open texture, among them pulax i sali and annIpenni, lend themselves better to this preparation than the gummier kinds favored for the preceding one.

(name not learned)-taro mashed and cooked with cream and grated coconut meat."

"Butchering a turtle is a job performed only by the highest chief. The proper place for it is between the canoe-house called Fan ni Wong (House of the Turtle), and the neighboring homestead, Uelepi, associated with the senior lineage of the Kovalū clan. Asked, in the presence of the chiefs, whether this association of turtles with the highest chief had any religious significance, Tom rather contemptuously denied it. Yet the pattern of associating turtles with high rank, which is widespread in the Pacific, is in some places explicitly religious. As a matter of fact, Tom begrudged the Kovalū clan's [83D] monopoly on turtle, and would be inclined to belittle the privilege in any way he could. He once spoke longingly of a visit to the uninhabited islands, where a man could eat all the turtle he could catch. Yet if the reservation of turtle for Kovalū clan, and the butchering by the highest chief, was thought of as explicitly religious, he would hardly have denied it.

The high chief, Wolpetau, made one job of butchering the three turtles that were caught within a few days. Before he cut them up, the first to be caught was left on its back, alive, for three days; the second for two days; the third,for approximately one. Two of the turtles had bodies more than three feet long. The total length of each, with head and tail extended, would have been more than four feet. The third was smaller, with a body--the part within the shell--about 30 inches long. To estimate the total weight of the meat is beyond my capacity; but it must have been fully 100 pounds, perhaps

two or even three times that.

The three turtles lay on their backs in the little grove between Fan ni Wong and Uelepi. The chief Wolpetau, with the aid of his adopted son Uveli, laid them side by side in shallow pits. The two built over them a hot, quick fire of light fuel, mostly dry coconut leaves; to kill them, I was told. After that, Wolpetau did all the work alone. He had for spectators, beside Uveli, two women of the household, his sister and niece; two young men, the niece's husband and another, not of the household, whose relationship is unknown to me; and a small boy of the household, the heir apparent to his title.

When the fire had burned down, Wolpetau hauled the first turtle out of the pit and carefully scraped off remaining bits of ash. Then, with a bush knife I had given him, he cut around the edge of the under shell, following a suture most of the way. At the tail he did not cut as close to the shell as possible, but straight across the base of the tail and the rectum. With this incision completed, he pried off the under shell.

Four iron pots were laid nearby when the work began. Two or three more were brought later. Pieces of each kind of meat were put into each pot, to be distributed as gifts. Three baskets, newly plaited of green coconut leaf, were ready, one for the intestines of each turtle. Several newly cut green leaves served as platters for the larger pieces of meat.

First to be removed were the slabs of muscle (witigo terag) overlying the fore flippers. Then the layer of green fat (ui) over the belly. The intestines (tal) were then hauled out

into the basket ready for them. The fore flippers (iengal) were then neatly cut through at the joint, twisted off, and tossed on one of the open leaves. Lean meat on the lower belly (fitiu) was partly distributed among the pots, the rest thrown on the leaves. Yellow fat (shā), found here and there among the other tissues, was distributed among the pots. A big triangular piece (peral) about the base of the tail was cut in two and put on the leaves. The eggs were left in the shell. The opening of the reproductive organs was thrown away. To prevent the women from hearing, Wolpetau whispered the name of this to me so softly that I could not hear it, either. The women, the least bit ostentatiously, paid no attention.

The other turtles were now cut up in the same way. Butchering all [83E] three made a fairly strenuous afternoon's work for an elderly man. The meat in the pots was cut up and cooked by the women. The largest pieces, those laid on the open leaves, were cooked in an earth oven (um). There was enough meat this time for quite a generous distribution. Not only was one of the pots brought to us, but a small basketful was given to Tom, who ate it all himself."

1: Burrows--183
116, 372, 252, 784

(1947-48)

Woleaians
Ifalik

"The fire on which a sick person's food is cooked may not be used by others. Households in which someone is sick will use two cooking fires, one for the invalid, the other for the rest of the people. Another taboo on sharing fire was exemplified by Tom when he asked Spiro to light a cigarette for a woman. He could not do it himself, he explained, because the woman was a classificatory sister."

2: Damm et al. --32 [3] (1909) 1938 Woleaians
116, 252, 462 Ifaluk

Women prepare the food, and steam it in earth ovens (felăn); these are similar to the ones used throughout Micronesia and Polynesia; you seldom find dishes roasted over an open fire.

2: Damm et al. --125
116, 225, 252

(1909) 1938

Woleaians
Aurupik

If the natives can seize a turtle on shore, they turn it over on its back; in the water they try to throw a snare over its front feet. The back shell is removed by fire.

2; Damm et al. --125 [2] (1909) 1938 Woleaians
116, 223, 225, 252 Aurupik

Birds are caught either with the djóu net, which does not have a diagonal stick, or with snares (nûm). There are two varieties of the latter: a) little snares arranged in rows on a wooden stick; b) a noose fastened to a stick. If the natives can seize a turtle on shore, they turn it over on its back; in the water they try to throw a snare over its front feet. The back shell is removed by fire.

2: Damm et al. --125 [4] (1909) 1938 Woleaians
116, 252 Aurupik

The food is roasted over an open fire (jăf; fire-wood is uĕs, smoke-bulăk, ash - madjŏdj) or steamed in the ground oven (felăn).

2: Damm et al. --167 [2] (1909) 1938 Woleaians
116, 252 Faraulep

All the women prepare the food in the house; the men just cook in the large house; in every case the children are the most eager helpers.

4: Krämer--41
116, 252, 415

(1909) 1937

Woleaians
Lamotrek

To cook--um. The container for flint and steel is called gaigers and is No. 2210 in Hellwig's catalogue; it is also known as gulegul.

4: Krämer--42
116, 252, 192

(1909) 1937

Woleaians
Lamotrek

lū	coconut palm	figs	gouall
mei	breadfruit	crataeva	gavudj (Truk: abut)
uidj	banana	sugar-cane	uóu
uot	finest kind of taro	plant	fatógi
fille	big taro (Truk: forest taro) resembling burak, bullok (Truk: pula and and mulek).		

4: Krämer--44-45
116, 252, 784

(1909) 1937

Woleaians -1
Lamotrek 2

Hambruch mentions:
Edible plants

swamp taro	uŏt, file	papaya	papuâi	
mountain taro	bulăk	sugar-cane	uâu	
breadfruit	mai	sweet potato	gamŏti	
banana	uis	pandanus is not eaten		
fig	faliap	coconut palm	liu	
cucumber tree	awŭs (Krämer gavudj)	chicken	măluk	animals
		dog	gălăgo	animals
pumpkin	kălăvăs			

...[45]

The coconut palm claims first place as a source of food, but breadfruit, mai, is very important. For that reason, the taboos which the breadfruit god Sauaur imposes are of special importance. In September one tries to find magic and an oracle for the voyage to Guam and to discover which boats are good and lucky. Then the period of the breadfruit taboos sets in. During that period no trees may be felled, no bulis extracted, no wooden bowls and wooden boxes must be made and no nets may be woven (no handle nets may be made either). Cords must not be twisted, clay cannot be fired and sails must not be made of pandanus leaves. The end of the breadfruit harvest comes in July and is known as the eamóimai.

Then follows a solemn banquet, the iles, which is held in the evening and which is mainly given for returning fishermen and navigators who have fasted up to this time. At the banquet a prayer is said in order to avert evil.

On the island, breadfruit dough, mär, is prepared in the same manner as on Truk; it is said to be especially good when it is eaten together with tak, Belone fish.

Breadfruit dough is prepared for preservation on Elato and is known as mär (Hambruch)

For immediate consumption, one part mar is mixed with three to four parts of water and the resulting mass is thoroughly wrung out in an old dress mat; then it is baked or cooked and is said to be a nutritious, though not very delicious dish; in the main it is eaten together with fish.

Elisabeth Krämer studied the preparation on Lamotrek and reports on it in the following manner; unripe breadfruit is peeled and the pits are removed; it is filled into a basket which is placed in stagnant sea water for half a day. Then the fruit is changed into another basket which is lined with fillë leaves and which is hung up for twenty-four hours. Once more the fruit is changed into another basket, lined with breadfruit leaves, which is hung up for a week. A hole one meter deep is dug and lined with a thick layer of breadfruit leaves; on this foundation banana leaves are placed and on them the breadfruit; then there is another layer of breadfruit and banana leaves. Instead of breadfruit, gull leaves may be used which last even longer. But in the course of a year the leaves are renewed every three months. Too much rain makes the mar rot. When the dough is taken out it is washed in fresh water until most of the acid has gone out of it; it is cooked once more before it is eaten, but only as much as is needed for one meal is prepared at one time. One of the dishes is called lüggum melli mare: the water of two old coconuts is kneaded into the mar; half a nut is grated; one part of the dough is mixed with a little water and cooked and the other part is kneaded with more water and mixed

with the mar. The latter type of dough is placed in layers on piles of leaves; on every layer some of the first part, and cooked coconut milk are added, and altogether there are about three layers. Then it is tied with coconut fibers, filled into approximately four breadfruit leaves and one banana leaf and cooked in the oven.

Word List--Cooking

oven	um
to dig a hole for an oven	earüe um
fire wood	saffi
fire	eaf
stones for the oven	faiûl um [47]
hot	apuósch
lay out hot stones	ràggu puori
scraping of taro*	faletti uot
wrapping of taro	tüggutuggu uot, ifféri uot
leaf	drö (droa--ripe coconut)
cover leaves	üff el um

A large amount of taro is cooked with expressed coconut milk when special feasts are

*With the shell pelligelli eralet

held, e.g., on the occasion of food presentations, pailügogo to the people who have helped with a funeral.

rouari uidj, green bananas are peeled and cooked in a pot together with water and expressed coconut milk.

4: Krämer--230 (1909) 1937 Woleaians
116, 252 Woleai

Food Dishes

djél, crushed taro or breadfruit dough mixed with gadji or expressed milk.

Born: djarong, coconut with bulak pieces.

limelim: taro stems are skinned and cooked with expressed milk or gadji; the same may be done with mar.

4: Krämer--231 (1909) 1937 Woleaians
116, 252, 462 Woleai

Cooking is the job of the women, who also weave in the cooking house (Lütke). A type of cooking school exists.

Kitchen utensils

Coconut shell (as drinking bowl), tagag e lúul; water bottle, baradjal.

Spoon, itit (Figure 98) [VMM: see source]. We also found tortoise shell spoons from Palau, and Hellwig found drinking tubes.

Eating spatula, Hellwig: gátik (fishtail: perál), atek from turtle bone, Figure 99 [VMM: see source], Krämer shows one 29 centimeters long. It is used for cracking a coconut, scraping it, and eating it.

4: Krämer--233 (1909) 1937 Woleaians
116, 252 Woleai

Green scarus is eaten raw in combination with breadfruit dough, mar.
According to Lütke, octopus is eaten after it has been cooked for 48 hours.

(1903) 1904

A favorite recipe of the Oleaï women consists of slices of Lack cooked together with coconut scrapings; this jarong keeps for one or two days.

Another staple food is breadfruit, mei. This is used for the marr recipe. The fruit is pared before it is quite ripe, sliced, and put into a basket made of coconut fronds together with the seeds. The basket is then placed in a shallow groove lined with the leaves of breadfruit trees and covered with large pieces of coral rock. They are left there for several months, and the leaves are changed several times. When they are taken out, the breadfruit pudding has a yellow color, a strong, unpleasant odor and is full of worms and larvae. The pudding may be left in the groove for as much as a year. The method of washing this marr is the criterion of a good cook. It is then placed in clean, woven mats and made into a paste with sweet toddy (the juice of the florescence of coconut blossoms) and coconut oil, and is then ready to be eaten.

28: Spiro--8 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 262, 252 Ifalik

"The largest single source of protein food, quite obviously is fish, though the supply is not as abundant as one would expect. Fish are prepared by either men or women, and are invariably cooked by taking them, uncleaned over burning embers. There are no taboos on non-noxious fish, with the exception of sharks, and grown octopus. (10) There is, however, a discriminatory taboo on turtle flesh. Only the males of the lineage of Uluas, from whose line descend the paramount chiefs, are permitted to eat of the flesh. Visiting anthropologists, of course, are exempt from this taboo."

"10. Here again, a note on 'primitive logic' might be injected. One afternoon, Taroman, one of the chiefs, brought us a baby octopus, which he had caught in the lagoon, offering it to us as a rare delicacy. We decided to prepare it for dinner, but in the interim Dr. Burrows told Tom, our interpreter, that Taroman had given us a tayo, the native name for octopus. Tom replied angrily that we should not eat it, and said he would reprimand Taroman for offering us food, that the natives considered unfit. We followed his advice and discarded it. But that evening Tom came to visit us, and ribbed us good-naturedly for our ignorance. Taroman had not given us a tayo, he had given us an xyz, the latter being a rare delicacy. The point of this being that an adult octopus is considered a different species from a baby, so that tayo is one thing, but xyz is something entirely different."

28: Spiro--40 [3] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 252 Ifalik

"Some fish may not be prepared in a frying pan. Dr. Burrows was about to fry some fish, when Maroligar told him that he would prepare them, for if they were cooked in a pan, the same species of fish would not enter the lagoon again."

28: Spiro--42 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 462, 252, 527 Ifalik

"The women's economic activities have been enumerated above, and need little technical explanation. The cooking is done in the cook-sheds, usually a number of women in the household working together. In the preparation of food for feasts two and three households may cooperate. Most cooking is performed over the open fire; the um, the underground stone oven distributed universally thoughout Oceania, being used only on the occasion of feasts."

28: Spiro--51 [2] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 776, 262, 252 Ifalik

"Wot is a species of taro, much rarer than the other two kinds of Ifaluk, and is prised very highly. Its value is apparently recognized by the alus as well, since it is the only other food eaten by them. When a person on earth is ill, wot is prepared for him, at the behest of the alus (that is, at the behest of Arogeligar), because of its presumed medicinal value. (12)"

"12. Wot is prepared differently from other kinds of taro. It is prepared differently from other kinds of taro. It is placed directly on the fire, and is removed after much charcoal formed. It is then ground fine, grated coconut meat is ground in with it, after which ground leaves of the warung and angorik plants are mixed in."

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

262 264 527 The people had brought many pots of breadfruit, cooked in different ways, and there was a large pile of drinking coconuts—also divided by Toroman. The meal lasted about an hour. I spent most of the time prowling around with the cameras while Ted and Don were more directly participating, squatting with the chiefly group. Ted reported that he liked best breadfruit that had been cooked with coconut [252] cream, resulting in a sort of mashed dough with the white, creamy, semi-sweet sauce.

123 648 That evening Don had his regular session of English and Ifaluk language exchange under the gasoline lanterns in the back of the Fan Nap. After the lesson Yani and his friend Tachiwelimeng lingered. They asked about the war between the United States and Japan, and got to telling about their own experiences. Tachiwelimeng had been taken by the Japanese to Fais, where there was a radio station. When the first American ship appeared off the island the Japanese got very excited, radioed the news to Yap, and then disappeared into hiding. The bombardment that followed scared everybody on the island. Tachiwelimeng spoke no English, but he was a born clown and gave a hilariously vivid pantomime of how the noise of the first shell tumbled him, how he crept behind a coconut palm and crouched in a ball, how a shell hit the coconut tree about six feet overhead and blew it down. No one was hurt except one of the Japanese, who was hit in the arm, but not seriously.

648 Japanese ships later took their captive labor to Yap, to use in filling holes in the landing strip made by the regular American bombings. Tachiwelimeng gave another graphic pantomime of American planes dodging Japanese ack-ack, bombs exploding all over the place and the like. These people seemed to look back on this as a big sideshow, bearing no resentment for the local people killed by the American bombings of Yap, and little resentment against the Japanese for getting them involved there.

126 The days were beginning to go by with remarkable speed. Ted gravely crossed them off, one by one, on a big calendar posted in the Fan Nap, and there was a check on this in my notebook, where the meteorological observations were entered every morning, first thing

.41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

pulled out and dumped, ready for distribution. This, as always, was the special function of Toroman. Five big red fish were put in a pile by themselves, for the chiefs, and there was another pile of special kinds of fish, mostly trigger-fish, set aside by custom for the old men. The remainder of the catch was sorted out roughly by size into piles of large, medium-sized and small fish. In the meanwhile, men representing each of the various households gathered around, smoking and chatting. All had freshly-woven coconut baskets for their share of the catch. These baskets, quickly made from the green palm frond, were the ordinary packaging material of the island.

In the first round, Toroman tossed to each man two of the larger and three of the middle-sized fish. Then each got ten to twenty fish from the middle-sized and small piles, the number depending on the size of the fish and the number of people in the household. Then every family got one more large fish.

Don and Yani weighed a few specimens of the different kinds and sizes of fish, and calculated that the total catch was about 630 pounds. About forty pounds of the smallest fish were thrown out as too small for use, or because they were of kinds considered inedible. The seine catch as distributed, amounted to about two pounds of fish per individual inhabitant.

Everyone had fish that evening, and very good it was. Several of the most prized kinds of fish were given to us. These were expertly fileted by Bakal, and equally expertly fried by Ted in bacon grease after being rolled in corn meal. Ted was a master at this. Jobs around the Fan Nap were generally pretty equally shared, but Don and I always tried to maneuver Ted into the fish frying job—not, for once, out of indolence, but because he really did have a touch. The Ifalukians generally roasted fresh fish like these whole over coals from small coconut-husk fires, and they were awfully good that way, too.

This kind of fishing, with giant rope-and-coconut-leaf tinsel dragged over the coral bottom of the outer reef, was called rop fishing. Whether Ifalukian rop had any connection with English rope was questionable. Ted thought the similarity coincidence, since the rop fishing must have been an ancient practice, long antedating any contact with English.

The Ifalukians, like the people of all of the old Micronesian and

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

Polynesian and Micronesian—had to carry the precious young plants with them on their long canoe voyages to new islands.

The famous expedition of Captain Bligh with the BOUNTY had the purpose of bringing young breadfruit trees from Tahiti for establishment in the West Indies, where the planters thought it would be an ideal food for their African slaves. This first attempt at importing the tree was frustrated by the mutiny, but plants were successfully brought in on a subsequent voyage. Breadfruit, however, never became a staple in the West Indies. People do not adopt new foods easily (not even slaves), and where new staple foods have been adopted—as in the case of the potato in Ireland—it is generally because of overwhelming advantages. Breadfruit seems not to have demonstrated such advantages to any non-Pacific culture.

We went out one morning with Tom and a young man of his household to gather breadfruit. The man who was going to pick the fruit carried a large coil of rope and a long pole which had a short crosspiece firmly tied near one end. We followed him through a complex maze of boondock paths to a large breadfruit tree. He threw the coil of rope over the lowest branch (about twenty feet up) and pulled it out with his pole, so that the rope was hanging double from the branch.

With the aid of the rope he climbed easily up the trunk to this first branch, whence he could scramble to any part of the top of the tree. We watched him walk upright along one horizontal branch about thirty feet above the ground, using his long pole as a sort of balance after the fashion of acrobats. With the pole he was able to break off fruit easily in any part of the tree, allowing the fruit to fall to the ground. The bruising apparently did not matter, though the fruit to be used for food must be gathered before it is completely ripe, while the pulp is still white and mealy.

The fresh fruit is either baked or boiled, with many minor variations in ways of cooking. I didn't think much of it, no matter how cooked. It seemed no better or no worse than potatoes, palatable enough with meat gravy—but the Ifalukians didn't have meat gravy.

Breadfruit is the only food on Ifaluk that can be stored for any

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

are "natural" and to what extent man-made, because they have been subject to careful cultivation for many generations. The care of the gardens is exclusively women's work and they become expert gardeners. The plants are set in neat rows in rectangular patches, each patch belonging to a particular household so that each household on the atoll has its share of the large Falalap gardens. Weeds grow luxuriously in the rich, mucky soil, and weeding is the main gardening chore. The weeds, I was interested to see, are always buried in the muck, so the practice of "green manuring" is an ancient one here. With young plants, coconut leaves were sometimes used as mulch, to cut down the growth of weeds.

I was greatly impressed, watching these women go about their work, at how little a Westerner would be able to tell them about gardening practices, at how well their methods were adapted to the plants and environment of their atoll. Perhaps one could put this another way, and wonder at how little modern "civilized" man with all his science has been able to improve on, or change, the gardening practices developed by peasant cultures through generations living close to the earth. We have made drastic changes in large-scale agriculture, but the gardener, throughout the world, shares a curiously large fund of common lore.

But I had intended to write here about food, not about agricultural methods. Wot and pulach were eaten to some extent, even during the breadfruit season, just as the preserved breadfruit (mar) was eaten to some extent at other times of the year, making some variation in the daily monotony of starch. There were many slightly different ways of cooking these tubers. We liked best a way of preparing wot (*Colocasia*) whereby it was mashed, cooked with coconut cream, moulded into little balls in a pot, and the whole covered with a thick paste of coconut meat. The effect was a little like that of mashed sweet potatoes served with heavy whipped cream.

Coconut, of course, permeated every aspect of Ifalukian cooking—the milk from green nuts and ripe nuts, the flesh from green nuts and ripe nuts, the sap from the cut flower stalks (here called hachi, perhaps best called "toddy" in English). The coconut was more often used as a supplement in cooking breadfruit or taro, as a seasoning, or the

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
OR21 Woleai OR21
Ifaluk

milk or toddy as a liquid for cooking, than as a food in itself. But the green nuts everywhere provided a handy source of drink; and the translucent, jelly-like flesh of these green nuts, eaten after the milk has been drunk, was surely a highly nutritious, though perhaps minor, food.

When a coconut sprouts, the hollow of the nut becomes filled with the white spongy tissue of a special absorbing organ (an extension of the cotyledon). This spongy tissue has a pleasant, sweetish taste and the Ifalukians were very fond of it. It often seemed to me that the juice of green coconuts filled the role on Ifaluk of soft drinks or mid-morning coffee in our culture; and that the spongy tissue of these sprouted nuts corresponded to candy bars, a tasty snack always readily available. The Ifalukian product, in both cases, would seem to be more "healthful" than its Western counterpart.

Toddy, or hachi, the sap that oozed from the cut flower stalks of coconuts, was a very important element in the Ifalukian dietary. Many palms have a strong flow of sap into the large, rapidly-growing flower stalks, and people in several parts of the world have learned to use this—most notoriously in a fermented form. The flow of sap was better in some coconut palms than in others, and on Ifaluk the particularly good palms were marked off for this special purpose of supplying toddy. Every morning and every evening all of the young men of the island were off on their rounds of collection, each with his special beat.

The toddy palms all had notches cut in the trunks to facilitate climbing. A man would go to each of his palms in succession, climb up to the crown, pour the sap accumulated in a coconut shell into the bottle he carried, shear off a thin slice from the end of the cut flower stalk to stimulate sap flow, replace the coconut shell to catch the drip, and go on to the next palm. Several quarts of the fresh sap were thus brought into every household each morning and evening.

The rich, sweetish sap was reserved primarily for the women and children—its place in the diet of Ifaluk seemed to correspond to milk in the diet of the West, and the regularity of the young men with their toddy chores reminded me strongly of the regularity of the milking chore in the rural West. It was, in fact, the only regularity we were

41: Bates & Abbott N-5 (1953) 1958
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able to observe on Ifaluk. Meal hours had no fixed time. There was generally only one large meal in a day, but the time of day at which this was eaten seemed to vary with the whim or convenience of each particular household. The time of toddy-collecting, however, was as unvarying as the sunrise and sunset with which it coincided; and every young man dropped whatever else he was doing at those times to carry out his chore.

Officially, the toddy was always used fresh on Ifaluk. As Ted had found during his first visit to the island, the chiefs had decreed prohibition. They had observed the effect of alcohol on the peoples of some of the neighboring and more Westernized atolls, where the people had easily learned how to distill the fermented toddy into really potent stuff, and they had decided that for the peace and security of the island it would be best if even fermentation were not allowed.

But toddy ferments easily and quickly. We noticed at some of the dance rehearsals an occasional older man with a definitely unsteady gait or a tendency to be too loud or too obvious, and concluded that he had allowed some toddy to follow its natural course by leaving it sit for a day. We had no direct evidence of the violation of prohibition, however, until toward the end of the summer when Tom offered us a sip from his bottle.

The stuff tasted very good to me, though perhaps I am no judge since my taste in alcohol is catholic. It had a pleasant, cider-like tang with, I should judge, about the strength of good beer.

Breadfruit, the two kinds of taro, and coconut, then, were the basic vegetables of the atoll. There were also a number of minor crops—especially papayas and several kinds of bananas and plantains. The papayas were fair, the bananas excellent, but they seemed to be little used by the people. We were often brought cooked green papayas, which have a squash-like texture and taste, and this seemed to be the way they were most commonly used. We were kept constantly supplied with bananas—we always had a bunch or two hanging to ripen in the Fan Nap—but the people seemed to consider them to be children's food. They appeared to prize the banana plants more for the fiber they got from the stem than for the fruit.

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262 and chickens. We included domestic animals in our census of the
731 island, and came out with a total of 280 people, five dogs, nineteen cats,
[161] thirty-three pigs and fifty chickens. The pig total included animals of all sizes, so pork was not a common article of diet. Only two pigs were slaughtered during the summer, not, as far as we could see, in celebration of any special occasion. The pork was simply boiled instead of
[052] being roasted in the traditional Polynesian style.

The fifty chickens were regarded also as a source of occasional meat. We found no instance of the eggs being used for food by the local people. Soon after we set up camp, a young man came around with some eggs which he offered to trade with us for cigarettes. We made a deal and started looking forward to next morning's breakfast. We decided to boil the eggs. It turned out that I liked mine at the three minute stage, the others in a somewhat harder condition. So I dipped my eggs out of the pot at the proper time and started to break one open only to disclose, not the expected runny yolk, but a fully developed chick, ready to hatch! A hasty examination showed all of the eggs to be in the same stage.

I don't know whether this was purposeful or accidental. I wondered whether the people knew of the Phillipine delicacy, balut, and assumed that all outsiders like their eggs in a late stage of development. At any
[437] rate, we got the idea across that we would like fresh eggs, and through the summer we were brought a fairly steady supply, always in return for cigarettes. After that first experience, we always carefully candled the eggs, occasionally finding one that seemed to be more chicken than egg, but this apparently by accident.

262 Although the Ifalukians did not eat chicken eggs, they were very fond of turtle eggs, and these at times turned up in good supply. The albumin of a turtle egg (at least of the eggs of the sea turtles of Ifaluk) does not coagulate on cooking. Don had a strong aversion to uncoagulated egg albumin, and I remember watching his efforts to make a turtle egg in a frying pan turn into something that might look like a respectable egg—yolk surrounded by the conventional white stuff to which we are accustomed. But the turtle egg still looked raw, no matter how long he fried it.

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I, of course, made the proper jeers about this culture-bound food aversion of his, which would cut him off from a rich local source of protein. Out of sheer bravado one morning I sucked turtle egg after turtle egg. I got nowhere in my effort to make Don feel foolish (he had great reserves of faith in his own prejudices) but I did make myself very sick. I suspect that the relation between the cramps and the turtle eggs was sheer coincidence; but for the rest of the summer I couldn't face a turtle egg with any more equanimity than Don could, and the eggs that were brought us were disposed of surreptitiously.

The Ifalukians were always bringing us food, more food than we could possibly have eaten with the best will in the world. We protested, but there was no stopping them. Much of it we didn't like—we were a very culture-bound trio, really, perfectly happy with our spam and canned spinach. We felt we couldn't run the risk of hurting the feelings of our hosts by admitting that we didn't much like their breadfruit and boiled pulax, so we would accept the food, eat what we could, and stealthily dispose of the rest in the lagoon at night.

We were always really grateful for gifts of fish, however, and my memories of the summer include the tastiest fish orgies of my whole life. We would turn the fish over to Bakal for fileting and Ted was really a master at rolling the filets in corn meal and frying them in bacon grease as I remarked before, and the Ifalukian fish, fresh out of the transparent waters of the lagoon, were just the right material with which to work.

But while we kept our respect for Ted and the Western method of frying things, we also fell in easily with the Ifalukian method of cooking fish. The commonest and perhaps the tastiest method was simply to roast the fish whole in coals of burned coconut husks. The hardened and carbonized skin could be easily peeled off, to reveal the tasty flesh. I have particularly fond memories of roasted parrot fish. Somewhere, from my Florida childhood, I had got the idea that parrot fish were inedible. I still don't know about the West Indian varieties, but I can certify that the parrot fish of Ifaluk were very edible indeed.

Don and I lost weight during the summer though hardly needing to. I had a gaunt and hungry look, twenty pounds below my normal weight, when I left after three months. I suspect this was our own fault, due to our careless habits of living off casually opened tins of